HETEROCLONIUM BICOLOR COPE, 1896 (REPTILIA, SQUAMATA): PROPOSED CONSERVATION BY SUPPRESSION OF *CHIROTES DIGLOSSIS* SAENZ, 1869. Z.N.(S.)2424

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In 1869, Nicolás Saenz described a worm-like reptile from Colombia under the name *Chirotes diglossis*, believing it to be a legged amphisbaenid related to *Chirotes* (now *Bipes*) *canaliculatus* of Mexico. Saenz's detailed description permits identification of his specimens not as an amphisbaenid (Suborder Amphisbaenia), but rather as a microteiid lizard (Suborder Sauria) currently known as *Bachia bicolor* (Cope, 1896).

2. The genus *Chirotes* Cuvier, 1817 is now considered a synonym of *Bipes* Latreille, 1802, the only genus of legged amphisbaenids in the New World and limited in distribution to Mexico and the Southwestern United States. The name *diglossis* Saenz has apparently never been used since its original publication with reference to any amphisbaenid. Dr Carl Gans (*in lit.*, 24 Sept. 1982) is of the same opinion. This may be because Saenz's description appeared in the Annals of Colombia's National University, a journal not widely circulated at the middle of the previous century, and not likely to come to the attention of students of amphisbaenids or microteiids.

3. Saenz did not formally designate a type specimen as such, but he based his description on a specimen of imprecise origin donated to the School of Natural Science of Colombia's National University in Bogotá by Dr Vargas Vega. The specimen was said to be kept in the school's specimen cabinet. Today the Instituto de Ciencias Naturales at the National University of Colombia has the largest collection of Colombian lizards in the world, but its oldest specimens date only from the late 1930s or early 1940s. It is exceptionally unlikely that Saenz's type specimen of *diglossis*, or a second specimen he said was also present, still exists.

4. The only published usage of Saenz's name *diglossis* that I am aware of is in the introduction to a list of specimens in the herpetology collection at Colombia's National University. Humberto Alarcón, 1979, noted only that: 'In 1869, while a student at National University, Nicolás Saenz published the description of a new lizard *Chirotes diglossis*, following closely the descriptions given by Duméril, Bibron & Duméril (of *Bipes canaliculatus*), and specifying that the holotype was deposited in the natural history specimen cabinet' (my translation). There is no previous recognition as to the correct identification of Saenz's specimens.

5. In 1896, Cope described *Heteroclonium* (now *Bachia*) *bicolor*, doubtless unaware of Saenz's description 27 years earlier. The name *bicolor* Cope has been widely used in the literature, for example by Dunn, 1944a, 1944b; Alemán, 1953; Valdivieso & Tamsitt, 1963; Nicéforo María, 1964; Medem, 1968; Peters & Donoso-Barros, 1970; Hoogmoed, 1973; Maclean, 1974 and Presch, 1980. The extensive literature on the genus *Bachia* and *B. bicolor* was recently unravelled and summarized by Dixon, 1973.

6. Therefore, in the interest of nomenclatural stability, I ask the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to:

(1) use its plenary powers to suppress the specific name *diglossis* Saenz, 1869, as published in the binomen *Chirotes diglossis,* for the purposes of the Principles of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy;

(2) place the specific name *bicolor* Cope, 1896, as published in the binomen *Heteroclonium bicolor,* on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology;

(3) place the specific name *diglossis* Saenz, 1869, as published in the binomen *Chirotes diglossis* and as suppressed under the plenary powers in (1) above, on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Names in Zoology.

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